

**Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Leiper, December 22, 1806, with Copy, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.**

**TO THOMAS LEIPER J. MSS.**

Washington, Dec. 22, 06.

Dear Sir, —This is merely a private letter, intended for yourself individually. If I have not answered the very friendly & flattering address I received through you, and the many others I have received, it is not from an insensibility to their kind and gratifying contents. No man feels them more powerfully than I do; no breast ever felt more consolation from such testimonies of good will. And the having given no answer to them has been the hardest act of self denial I have been called upon to perform. But on consultation with friends here, there is but one opinion, that the question presented by these addresses cannot be touched without endangering the harmony of the present session of Congress, and disturbing the tranquility of the nation itself prematurely & injuriously. I express these sentiments to you, privately, because they will enable you to give in conversation a true solution to the fact of my giving no answer. The present session is important as having new & great questions to decide & in the decision of which no schismatic view should take any part. It may become still more important, should the measures we have taken fail to suppress the insurrectionary expedition now going on under Colo. Burr. A few days will let us know whether the western states suppress that enterprise, or whether it is to require from us a serious national armament. Our little band in Congress has as yet been quiet: but some think it is from a sense of importance, not a conviction of error, or motives of good will. But all these schisms, small or great only accumulate truths of the

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solid qualifications of our citizens for self government. Accept my friendly salutations and assurances of great & constant esteem.